

BIRCH FUNDS STUDY HINTED

Keating Wants Senate To
Decide On Action

STATINTL.

Washington, April 23 (AP)—Senator Keating, (R., N.Y.), wants the Senate to decide whether the John Birch Society should be required to account for "a potential income of over \$18,000,000 a year."

Keating, a member of the Senate Internal Security subcommittee, said today either that group or a specially created select Senate committee also should determine whether the militantly conservative society is resorting to "harassment, intimidation and economic blackmail" against its critics.

The Internal Security subcommittee is considering whether it has jurisdiction to investigate the society founded by Robert Welch, retired Belmont, (Mass.), candy manufacturer. Welch himself has requested an investigation by that subcommittee.

Cotton Disagrees

Senator Cotton (R., N.H.), another subcommittee member disagreed with Keating. He said he didn't think the internal security unit had jurisdiction and saw no reason at this time for an investigation by any other congressional committee.

He said he doesn't believe the subcommittee should furnish "a publicity forum for those who desire to be investigated and wish to publicize their aims and purposes."

Keating, in a program recorded for television and radio stations in New York, said that all Americans must be alert to the "menace of communism," which the society is pledged to fight.

"The fact is, however," the Senator said, "that extremist organizations often do more harm than good in the fight against communism."

Goals Noted

Keating said the John Birch Society claims chapters in 35 states and has a goal of 1,000,000 members.

"Under its dues schedule," the Senator added, "it has a potential income of over \$18,000,000 a year. Yet it is alleged that the society makes no accounting of its funds to its membership."

He said Congress should decide whether legislation is needed to require financial reports to the Government.

There are also disturbing reports which indicate the society is resorting to various forms of intimidation against its critics," Keating said. He said he does not know whether such reports are true, but added, "If it should turn out that harassment, intimidation and economic blackmail are being used to interfere with individual freedom, then possibly legislation ought to be devised to protect the victims of such tactics."

Objective Held Proper

Keating said the society's objective of influencing legislation is perfectly proper. But, he said, that obligates Congress "to determine whether the lobbying laws and the Corrupt Practices Act should be made applicable to the John Birch Society."

Keating made reference to the criticism of high American officials by the leader of the Birch Society, asserting:

"It is certainly no help to the cause of freedom to undermine confidence in the loyalty of the President of the United States, the head of the CIA, former Secretary of State Dulles, and other high Government officials, as the leader of the John Birch Society has done."